1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

sometimes silver, or again may be of cheaper metals. These are allowed to rub one against the other and make a tinkling sound as they move. There are ten toe-rings, one for each toe. It is not to be thought that these things are all worn continually. A few are always worn, and when some opportunity arises to wear the others, they are put on. 301

A lac *bha* is stuck on the forehead of young married women. This is put on by the husband in order that all may see that she is married and also to protect both of them. [585]

TATTOOING. Every woman should have tattoo marks (*godna*) upon her body. Men are not tattooed. The time for this varies. Among more Hinduized sections it is said that it should be done at puberty, that is, at the ages of ten to twelve. Again, and it seems to be the more common custom among the Kols, the *godna* is done shortly before the marriage. In certain cases which we came across, it was said to have been done after marriage. Kols do not do the tattooing themselves, but it is done by the regular tattooer called *bajigar* or *godnari*. 304 [184]

On the accompanying text figures tattoo designs copied from Kol women are shown. There is generally a purpose for each position. Design 1 is placed on various parts of the body. It is found over the right kidney region to take away pain. It is also put on the breasts to ensure a good supply of milk. On the palms of the hands it is believed to help in making *chapatis* light and palatable; on the arms it is supposed to benefit the husband, while on the face it is purely decorative. 304 789 [531]

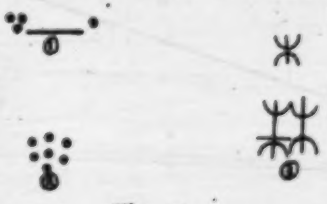

Fig. 12

Design 2 was found inside the left wrist.

Design 3 was on the right leg and takes away pain.

Design 4 was on the outside of the upper left arm. It was mainly decorative, but a protective significance was also suggested. It was said that in this case it took two hours to tattoo the design and that it was a very painful process. (See figure 13.)

Design 5 was found on the same woman on the outside of the left forearm. Another Kol woman had design 6 on the inside of the left forearm. This same woman had design 7 on the outside of the upper left arm. (See figures 14, 15, 16.)

There are certain traditions connected with tattooing. We were once told that when a Kolin is cremated Bhagawan catches the hand which has the *godna* and conducts her to *Baikunths*. Therefore, it is 304 776 775 789

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304 775 776 789 exceedingly important that the hands and the arms should be tattooed. In case the body is buried, the tattoos, as another group told us, save the body; for when *Baimata*, a female demon, comes to devour it she cannot eat any of the tattooed portions, and thus much more is left to go to Bhagawan.[1]

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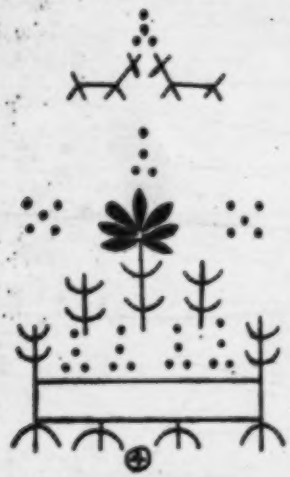

Fig. 13

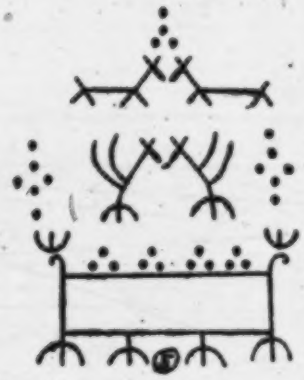

Fig. 14

304 789 Tattooing also wards off the evil eye, to which women, especially when with child, are very susceptible. As stated above, it has also a medical significance, in that it keeps the organs healthy and functioning properly. The tattooings about the ankle are a protection against snake bite.

000 The art of tattooing is probably of Polynesian origin and its widespread practice among Munda tribes may be due to their common racial affinities.

304 It was noted above that Kols say that *Bajigars* do their tattooing. *Bajigar* literally means a 'juggler', 'actor'. Russell and Hiralal know nothing of this group unless it be the same as *Bajgari*, a subcaste of *Gandas*. The latter are wandering musicians and are considered unclean. It is not unlikely that Kols make use of other groups for tattooing but the available information is not conclusive on this point. The [386] term *godnari* means simply "one who tattoos." The colours usually used are blue and black, and the operation is often a painful one. The

1 See Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, p. 148.

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basis of the black colour is soot. Sometimes this is obtained by burning certain kinds of wood and cocoanut shells. It is finely powdered and mixed with water. Sometimes milk from the breast is said to be a desirable solvent. After pricking, the parts are oiled with a mixture of *haldi* and *til* oil, which soothes the affected parts and removes any impurity from the touch of the tattooer.

Fig. 15

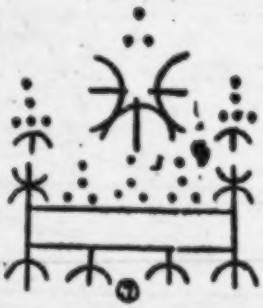

Fig. 16

AGRICULTURE. Kols mostly work as labourers in the fields of others, and even where they rent their fields, there is nothing in their methods which is not characteristic of the whole countryside. February to April is the usual slack season, although during the latter part of this period the wheat crop is harvested in Central India, and the threshing season is on. Before the rains at the end of June the ground is made ready for the first showers, and is roughly scratched with rude ploughs. Just before the rains the seed is broadcast in a prepared plot and is transplanted in the mud after the monsoon has broken. Only men sow the seed. From July to September the rice is growing and must be weeded and looked after. The weeding is generally done by women, but men also help. In October the rice is cut and threshed and stored. The soil, still moist from the monsoon rains, is now prepared for the wheat crop which is sown about the end of October or early in November. The wheat also requires weeding and care, and is ready for the harvest in late March and April. Religious observances in connection with agriculture are described in a later chapter.

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poured over the mother who is now considered as perfectly clean—able to take her full place in society again. That night there is a feast for the women folk only, called *bilsi*. Special foods prepared with *haldi* and *ghi* are partaken of, there is singing and dancing following the feast, and the whole ceremony usually lasts all night. If a feast is impossible raw sugar (*gur*) is distributed among the singers. The whole procedure

Fig. 18

is usually called *chhatthi*, or sixth day ceremony and signifies the removal of uncleanness. In Rewa we were told that at this time Dulha Baba, who is often regarded as a household god, should be worshipped. Certain drawings are put upon the walls of the houses at this time. They

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

vary considerably, but the accompanying text figure 18, shows a form that was found by us. [531]

During the time the woman is confined to the house the man goes about his work just the same and no trace of the couvade has been found. If it can be managed, on the twelfth day after birth there is further rejoicing with a family feast. [574]

CHILDHOOD RITES. *Naming the Child.* Amongst the Kols of Central India the giving of the name, so important in some primitive cultures, does not seem to hold a place of any great significance. Of course certain things as noted below are done, but no trace was found of any magical rites used in the selection of names, such as Roy describes in the case of the Oraons and the Kharias.[1] There is no fixed time within which the name must be given. Under more primitive conditions we have found that often no ceremony whatsoever was in use, and when a name was given the Brahmin priest was not called in. While there is no set time for the giving of the name it is generally preferred that it be given from ten to fifteen days after birth. The proposed name may be discussed in the family before hand, and actually given to the child by one of its parents or near relatives, a friend, or even a stranger. In the latter instance we were told on two occasions that should a *chaudhari* Chamar happen to pass through the village at a propitious time he might be requested to name the child. At the time of the bestowal of the name, in the case where the family selects the name itself, the child is taken into the arms of the person giving the name who then formally announces it to those present. Until such a name is given the child is called by a pet name, *dadu* for the boy and *butu* for the girl. In Kotmi, near the borders of Rewa State, the village priest, the Kol *panda*, gives the child a name and receives four pice for this act. At the same time, being the official vaccinator, he vaccinates the child against small pox: it is a crude vaccination, but in this way the Government is able to provide some protection from the disease. [564] [751]

Among the more Hinduized Kols use is made of the Brahmin priest. He is called upon to select the child's name and does this from a list of names in his possession which are considered auspicious for children born at certain seasons. He is paid from one to four annas for this performance. It is common to find names derived from days of the week, and Monday and Tuesday, *Somvara* and *Mangalbara* are said to be the best; the child is never named after Saturday. Again, the name of the month may be used, as in the case of the name Phagu, [793]

1 Roy, S. C., *Oraon Religion and Customs*, p. 129; *The Kharias*, pp. 209 ff.

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of charms used are discussed in the chapter on Magic and Witchcraft.

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PUBERTY. From the above mentioned ceremonies until the Kol child reaches puberty, there is little of importance to note. When the first milk tooth falls out the child is told to take it outside near the house, to shut his eyes and to throw it on the roof, never looking to see where it has gone. This will aid in the coming in of the new tooth.

304

The girl is tattooed when between the ages of ten and twelve and just before her marriage may be given further tattooing. In the Kaimur hills it was said that a woman must be tattooed, for without it Bhagawan would not know how to grasp her and take her spirit on its way to the heavens. No ceremonies occur at the time of tattooing, and apart from saying that it is the custom Kols could give us almost no information on the matter. The designs are usually similar to those of their Hindu neighbours and the actual tattooing is done by the same man who does it for other castes. See the description on pages 28-31.

[775]

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No particular rites are observed in connection with the girl's first menstruation. At such a time she is asked to stay in the house and if there is a second room into which she can go she retires there. She is not put out into a menstruation hut as is common among some Munda tribes. During the four to six days that the menses last she is considered unclean and should not cook, bring water for the family, nor touch men's clothes. When the menses have ceased she has to go to the village shrine and offer a cocoanut.

[782]

[884]

Nowhere among the Kols were we able to find any definite trace of puberty rites which are common elsewhere. We were told that a boy of the Kol tribe could only be considered a Kol when he reached the age of twelve to thirteen. In the full sense he becomes of age when he is sixteen. A girl is considered to be of age when she goes to live for good in the house of her husband. No traces were discovered of any ordeal that either sex had to undergo; no scars are made on the body nor were any hair tying ceremonies observed among the groups studied.

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Bachelors' Quarters. No trace was found of bachelors' quarters nor of segregated dormitories for boys and girls, which are well-known among the Mundas and allied tribes of Chota Nagpur. The Gonds of Bastar and elsewhere also have them. They have been considered as a place for sex instruction but the system has been widely criticised by the more advanced Mundas and is being abandoned in many places. Other writers have attributed no social or religious importance to these quarters. One writes: "The thing is that the poor people in a village cannot afford to build big houses for themselves containing

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Lemons and Limes are able to protect one by attracting the attention of the spirit so that he forgets his original evil intentions. So a lime may be carried about one, tied in the loin cloth. A spirit approaches the man, smells the lime and makes for it, and is so taken up with its 'find' that it forgets the man. If this should happen, the lime upon examination will be found to bear evidences of this attack: the juice will be drained away and the lime may even be split. At the time of worship a lime is sometimes cut and thrown as far as possible. Evil spirits hovering about the sacrifice will take after the lime and, fighting over it, will forget what is going on at the shrine. Limes are also pleasing to *devis* and when the *hom* sacrifice is made some lime juice is frequently squeezed into the fire.

Magic Circles. There are many forms of the magic circle and the shape does not always have to be circular. Any circular article like a bangle or a string of beads is a protection. At the time of the *bawa* an iron ring will often be found encircling the fire for the *hom* offering. The tying of the village with a mixture of charcoal, liquor and milk is an example of the use of the magic circle. Such a circle is put about the place of worship if demonic influence is feared. The circle of ashes round the bed of the mother and her new-born babe has been previously mentioned.

Magic Symbols and figures are also efficacious. Such are pictured upon the walls of the lying-in room and on the walls outside the door, and we have given reproductions of them.[1] Sometimes they are tattooed on the body, and the swastika and the *shasti* are the favourites. Symbols marked by the priest on the forehead are useful protective devices.

Mantras. There is also a great power resident in *mantras* or magic spells. Such *mantras* are very potent in driving off evil spirits. At one time *mantras* may have been Vedic texts, but now-a-days the term *mantra* "is extended to all magical forms of words, letters, sounds or any hocuspocus which bring good luck to the happy possessor of them and evil to his enemies, spirits, or casters of the evil eye. These are often inscribed on paper, the ink in which they are written is drunk, or they are kept in metal cases or inscribed on metal or other talismans."[2]

Some *mantras* which may be used against evil spirits and diseases are as follows:

1 See page 68.
2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 250.